FENG SHUI

Whether, as has been said, the set of beliefs and practices called *feng shut*—literally, wind and water—should be classified under religion may be a matter of debate. Whatever its pigeon-hole in an orderly account, it has played and, to a diminished extent, still plays an important part in Chinese life.

Feng shui is based upon the belief that in every locality forces exist which act on graves, buildings, cities, and towns, either for the welfare or the ill of the quick and the dead. The object of *feng shui,* therefore, is to discover the sites where the beneficent influences predominate, or so to alter, by artificial means, the surroundings of existing sites that the same happy results may be achieved. To attain these ends advice is sought from specialists In *feng shui.*

Among the factors with which *feng shui* reckons are the *yang* and the *yin;* the *ch'i* (sometimes translated breath) pervading the universe and of which there may be two divisions, the *t'ien ch'i,* or *ch'i* of Heaven, and the *ti ch'i,* or *ch'i* of Earth; the four creatures—the azure dragon, the white tiger, the black tortoise, and the red bird—associated with the four quarters of the heaven; wind (bearing water or drought); and the five traditional elements (metal, earth, fire, water, and wood), especially water. When it comes to the actual choice of a site, experts in *feng shut* often differ widely as to the worth of a particular locality—a lack of agreement which the sceptical hold up to derision. There appear, however, to be some general principles upon which the decision is supposed to be made. An ideal site is protected on the north (from which the *yin* comes), is open to the south (associated with the *yang),* has water flowing in such a

way as partly to encircle it but not so directly away from it as to drain off the good influences, and possesses some natural feature, such as a hill or hummock, in the direction of the dragon (on the east or left) stronger than that of the tiger (on the west or right). Some natural object, such as a hill, or some building, especially a high building, in front of a site—even some distance away—may do serious damage. A straight road, such as a railway, may also work much harm by permitting the good influences to drain away. On the other hand, an otherwise unpropitious site may be improved